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Message Text

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AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0304

CAIRO FOR CODEL PERCY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, PGOV, SA, OREP (PERCY, CHARLES)
SUBJECT: PRINCE FAHAD ON INTERNAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT AND SAG-IRANIAN RELATIONS

SUMMARY: DURING MEETING WITH SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRINCE FAHAD, SENATOR PERCY STATED THAT PRESENT MODERATE ARAB LEADERS PROVIDED ISRAEL WITH OPPORTUNITY TO CONCLUDE PEACE WITH ARABS AND STATED HE WOULD MAKE THIS POINT IN ISRAEL. THE SENATOR WOULD OPPOSE ANY ATTEMPT BY EITHER SIDE, THROUGH THE USE OF FORCE, TO UPSET THE EFFORTS OF DOCTOR KISSINGER TO BRING PEACE TO THE AREA. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, PRINCE FAHAD OUTLINED A THREE-STEP PROCESS WHEREBY SAUDI ARABIA MIGHT EVENTUALLY HAVE A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEGISLATURE; AFFIRMED THE SAG'S INTEREST IN STABILIZING OR LOWERING OIL PRICES; AND GAVE A QUALIFIED REASSURANCE OF GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN THE SAG AND IRAN. END SUMMARY.

SENATOR PERCY TOLD PRINCE FAHAD THAT HE INTENDED TO MAKE IT CLEAR TO ISRAEL DURING HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT THAT HE AND MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD NOT SUPPORT AN ISRAELI ATTEMPT TO UPSET THE EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS EXERTED BY
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DR. KISSINGER TO BRING PEACE TO THE AREA. THE SENATOR

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SAID THAT PRESIDENT FORD, VICE PRESIDENT ROCKEFELLER AND SECRETARY KISSINGER ARE ALL CONCENTRATING THEIR EFFORTS AND ATTENTION ON THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACHIEVE A SOLUTION THROUGH DIPLOMATIC MEANS RATHER THAN THROUGH MILITARY FORCE. ANY ATTEMPT BY THE ISRAELIS TO EMPLOY MILITARY FORCE TO DISTURB THE PRESENT PEACE EFFORTS WOULD BE STRONGLY CRITICIZED BY THE SENATOR AND MANY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE PEACE EFFORT WOULD BE EQUALLY BAD IF THE ARABS SHOULD RENEW HOSTILITIES. IT IS MOST IMPORTANT, SAID SENATOR PERCY, THAT SAUDI ARABIA USE ITS INFLUENCE TO INSURE THAT ITS ARAB BROTHERS SEEK A DIPLOMATIC SOLUTION AND NOT ATTEMPT TO RELY ON THE USE OF FORCE. THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE WOULD URGE PRIME MINISTER RABIN TO SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONCLUDE PEACE WITH PRESIDENT SADAT, A MODERATE AND RESPECTED LEADER WHO SEEMS TO GENUINELY WISH PEACE. THE SENATOR SAID THAT HE HOPED THAT IN URGING THIS MOVE HE COULD TAKE TO ISRAEL ASSURANCES THAT SAUDI ARABIA WILL LEND ITS PRESTIGE TO THE FAITHFUL OBSERVANCE OF ANY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS WHICH MIGHT BE CONCLUDED. THE SENATOR FELT THAT THREE RECENT ACTIONS BY THE USG--THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JOINT ECONOMIC AND SECURITY COMMISSIONS: THE SALE OF JET AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA; AND THE APPROVAL OF IRANIAN TRANSFER OF F5-A'S TO JORDAN--SERVED AS SIGNALS TO ISRAEL, DEMONSTRATING THE USG'S DESIRE FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE ARABS AND FOR A SOLUTION TO THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM.

2. PRINCE FAHAD REPLIED BY AFFIRMING SAUDI ARABIA'S DESIRE TO SEE A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WHICH WOULD BE SATISFACTORY TO BOTH SIDES. HE REVIEWED AT SOME LENGTH THE LONG HISTORY OF USG-SAG COOPERATION AND SPOKE OF THE NEED TO BE ALERT TO OPPOSE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE AREA.

3. FAHAD ON DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS: SENATOR PERCY ASKED PRINCE FAHAD WHAT STEPS THE PRINCE COULD FORESEE TOWARD BRINGING ABOUT MORE DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA. THE PRINCE OUTLINED A THREE-STEP PROCESS. (A) FIRST, THE "FORMATION" OF AN ADVISORY CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNCIL (MEMBERS TO BE SELECTED REPEATED SELECTED BY THE SAUDI LEADERSHIP) WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF FROM 60-80 WELL EDUCATED MEMBERS. THIS BODY WOULD ASSIST THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BY STUDYING AND ADVISING ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS. (B) AT SOME LATER DATE SOME 3,000-5,000 SAUDIS, OF THE ELITE AND EDUCATED CLASSES, WOULD BE INVITED TO ELECT PERHAPS SOME 100 DELEGATES TO REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF THIS EDUCATED CLASS IN LEGISLATIVE MATTERS. (C) FINALLY,

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ONCE THE MASSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM NOW BEING UNDERTAKEN BY
THE SAG HAS HAD SUFFICIENT TIME TO PRODUCE A GENUINELY
EDUCATED MIDDLE CLASS WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY INCLUDE A
MAJORITY OF THE CITIZENRY, THEN THE FULL DEMOCRATIC ELEC-
TION OF REPRESENTATIVES TO A LEGISLATIVE BODY COULD TAKE
PLACE. SUCH ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE HELD AT THE PRESENT
STATE OF SAUDI ARABIA'S POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT, SAUDI FAHAD
BECAUSE TO DO SO WOULD RESULT MERELY IN THE ELECTION OF
TRIBAL LEADERS AND SHAIKHS TO AN ASSEMBLY, SINCE ONLY SUCH
PEOPLE HAVE A STRONG POLITICAL BASE IN THE COUNTRY. THE
PRESENT EDUCATED ELITE IS WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE POLITICAL
BASE TO INSURE THAT IT WOULD BE REPRESENTED IN AN ASSEMBLY
IF ELECTIONS WERE TO BE HELD NOW. AN ASSEMBLY OF TRIBAL LEADERS AND
SHAIKHS WOULD NOT BE BENEFICIAL TO THE COUNTRY SINCE ITS
MEMBERS WOULD BE UNABLE TO DEAL WITH THE COMPLEXITIES
OF MODERN DAY PROBLEMS.

4. OIL PRICES: THE SENATOR ASKED PRINCE FAHAD IF HE
COULD ASSURE HIM THAT IF THE UNITED STATES WOULD REDUCE
ITS OIL CONSUMPTION THAT SAUDI ARABIA WOULD NOT THEN RAISE
PRICES TO KEEP INCOME AT PREVIOUS LEVELS. THE PRINCE
REPLIED THAT THE SAG FAVORED CONSERVATION OF NATURAL
RESOURCES AND WAS WORKING TO STABLIZE OR LOWER THE PRICE
OF OIL, AND NOT TO RAISE IT.

5. SAG-IRANIAN RELATIONS: SENATOR PERCY ASKED HIS HIGHNESS
FOR A FRANK ASSESSMENT OF SAUDI VIEWS ON IRAN. PRINCE
FAHAD STATED THAT THERE WERE NO PROBLEMS BETWEEN THE TWO
COUNTRIES. HE STATED THAT HE HAD A STANDING INVITATION TO
VISIT IRAN, BUT HAD THUS FAR SET NO DATE. SAG-IRANIAN RELA-
TIONS WOULD REMAIN GOOD AS LONG AS THE SHAH SHOWS NO TERRI-
TORIAL AMBITIONS. RELINQUISHMENT OF THE IRANIAN CLAIM TO
BAHRAIN HAD BEEN AN ASTUTE MOVE. BUT SHOULD THE SHAH EVER
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SHOW ANY INTEREST IN ACQUIRING TERRITORY ON THE ARAB SIDE
OF THE GULF THEN NATURALLY THIS WOULD HAVE AN ADVERSE
EFFECT ON SAG-GOI RELATIONS. AKINS

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